Barrier Grouping 8

Environmental and Social Impacts

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Renewable resources have potential negative environmental and societal impacts that can be barriers to implementation.

Barrier 8.a Potential negative environmental and social impacts.

DEFINITION:

Renewable resources have potential negative environmental and societal impacts that can be barriers to implementation.

DISCUSSION:

Renewable resources are commonly perceived to have less negative impact upon the environment and society than conventional fossil-fueled generation resources. Nonetheless, renewable resources do have potential negative environmental and societal impacts that can be barriers to implementation. The environmental and societal impacts of renewable resources is very site-specific. Negative impacts may be a real barrier to the development of renewables at certain sites.

Potential negative environmental and societal impacts of various renewable resources may include noise, visual impacts, impacts upon endangered species, extensive land use requirements, destruction of habitat and/or archeological sites, surface and groundwater contamination, toxic emissions, health hazards, and decommissioning impacts.

Even if the permitting processes for the implementation of renewable generation are expedited, the negative environmental and societal impacts of renewables should be taken into consideration. In some cases these impacts can be mitigated. In some cases the negative impacts of renewables may make implementation unacceptable at certain sites.

Because the impacts are resource and project specific the strategies applicable to mitigating the impacts generally will be resource and project specific.

STRATEGIES:

Strategy 8.a.1 Negative impacts should be taken into consideration in the siting and selection of renewable resources.

DISCUSSION:

There is no question that the negative impacts of any resource should be taken into consideration in siting and resource selection.

VEHICLE: Siting decisions, IRP process, Permitting processes

AGENCY: Utilities, Renewable Developers, PUC, Permitting Agencies

POSITION OF THE PARTIES:

PROPONENTS: heco, ke, d, ki, m, h, n, ca, r, z

OPPONENTS:

NO POSITION: p, krl, i, w, ers

Strategy 8.a.2 To the extent practical and cost-effective, negative impacts should be mitigated by appropriate design, location and other means to minimize negative impacts.

DISCUSSION:

There is no question that practical, cost-effective measures should be taken to mitigate negative impacts of any generation resource.

VEHICLE: Renewable project selection and design, IRP process, Permitting processes

AGENCY: Utilities, Renewable Developers, PUC, Permitting Agencies

POSITION OF THE PARTIES:

PROPONENTS: heco, ke, d, ki, m, h, n, z, ca

OPPONENTS:

NO POSITION: p, krl, i, w

Strategy 8.a.3 The avoided impacts of renewables projects (for example: decreased reliance upon fossil fueled resources) should be considered in assessing the negative impacts of renewables projects.

DISCUSSION:

In the IRP process the costs and benefits of all types of resources are supposed to be taken into consideration in the selection of a preferred resource plan. In most other permitting activities, however, only negative impacts tend to be explicitly considered. Permitting agencies should consider the net benefits of renewable projects as well as negative impacts in permitting decisions.

VEHICLE: IRP process, Permitting processes

AGENCY: PUC, Permitting Agencies

POSITION OF THE PARTIES:

PROPONENTS: d, ki, m, h, n, ca, r, z

OPPONENTS:

NO POSITION: heco, ke, p, krl, i, w, ers